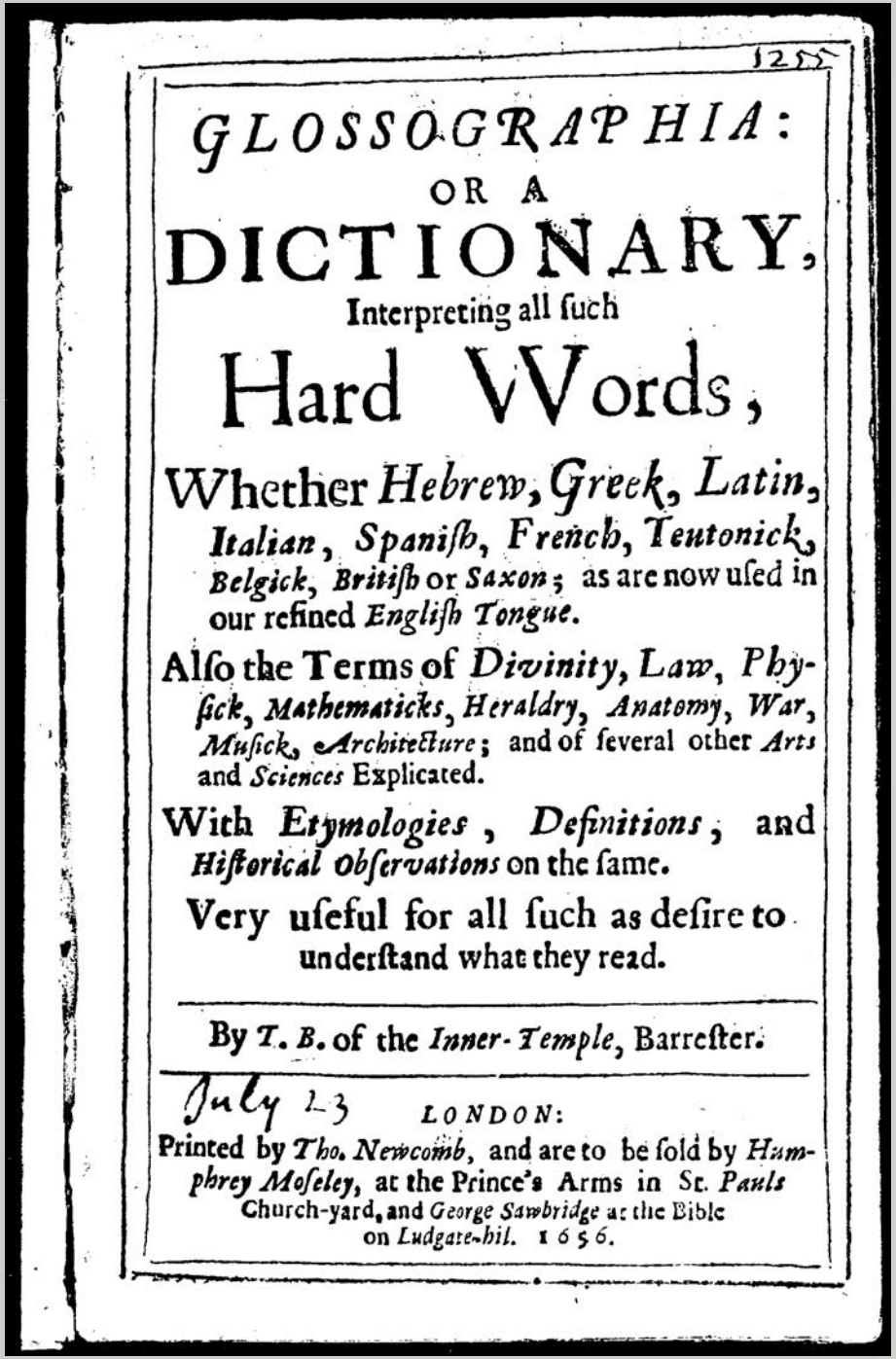
Dictionaries, Grammar, and Grammarians



1255

GLOSSOGRAPHIA:
OR A
DICTIONARY,
Interpreting all such
Hard Words,
Whether *Hebrew*, *Greek*, *Latin*, *Italian*, *Spaniſh*, *French*, *Teutonick*, *Belgick*, *Britiſh* or *Saxon*; as are now uſed in our refined *Engliſh Tongue*.
Alſo the Terms of *Divinity*, *Law*, *Phyſick*, *Mathematicks*, *Heraldry*, *Anatomy*, *War*, *Muſick*, *Architecture*; and of ſeveral other *Arts* and *Sciences* Explicated.
With *Etymologies*, *Definitions*, and *Hiſtorical Obſervations* on the ſame.
Very uſeful for all ſuch as deſire to underſtand what they read.

By *T. B.* of the *Inner-Temple*, Barreſter.

July 23 LONDON:
Printed by *Tho. Newcomb*, and are to be ſold by *Humphrey Moſeley*, at the Prince's Arms in St. *Pauls* Church-yard, and *George Sawbridge* at the Bible on *Ludgate-hil*. 1656.

Glossographia: or A dictionary, interpreting all such hard words, whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, Teutonick, Belgick, British or Saxon; as are now used in our refined English tongue. Also the terms of divinity, law, physick, mathematicks, heraldry, anatomy, war, musick, architecture; and of several other arts and sciences explicated. With etymologies, definitions, and historical observations on the same. Very useful for all such as desire to understand what they read.

By T.B. of the Inner-Temple, Barrester, London: Printed by Tho. Newcomb, and are to be sold by Humphrey Moseley, at the Prince's Arms in St Pauls Church-yard, and George Sawbridge at the Bible in Ludgate-hil, 1656.

ligious Orders; *as* Carmelites, Carthusians, Cisterians, Cheatins, Bonhomes, &c. *So likewise both of antient and modern* Sects; *as* Arrians, Eutychians, Jacobites, &c. Anabaptists, Arminians, Erastians, Thraskites, Socinians, Quakers, &c.

In Books of Divinity, I found Sanhedrim, Urim *and* Toummim, Shibboleth; Hypostatical, Circuminsession, Introversion, Extroversion, &c.

In every Mercurius, Coranto, Gazet, *or* Diurnal, *I met with* Camizado's, Pallizado's, Lantspezado's, Brigades, Squadrons, Curaciers, Bonmine, Halts, Junta's, Paroles &c.

In the mouths of common people, I heard of Piazza, Balcone, &c. *in* London: *And in the Country, of* Hocktide, Pinnyng days, Lurdanes, Quintins, &c.

Nay, to that pass we are now arrived, that in London *many of the Tradesmen have new Dialects; The* Cook *asks you what Dishes you will have in your* Bill of Fare; *whether* Olla's, Bisques, Harbies, Omelets, Boullon's, Grilliades, Joncades, Fricasses; *with a* Hautgoust, Ragoust, &c.

The Vintner *will furnish you with* Montefiascone, Alicant, Vernaccia, Rivolla Tent, &c. *Others with* Sherbet, Agro di Cedro, Cossa, Chocolate, &c.

The Taylor *is ready to make you into a* Rochet, Mandillion, Gippon, Justacor, Capouch, Hoqueton, *or a Cloke of* Drap de-Berry, &c.

The

The Shoo-maker *will make you* Boots, Whole Chase, Demi-Chase, *or* Bottines, &c.

The Barber *will modifie your Beard into* A la Banchini, a la Gascoinade, *or* a la Candale.

The Haberdasher *is ready to furnish with a* Tigone, Codebec, *or* Castor, &c. *The* Semstress *with a* Crobbat, Toylet, &c.

By this new world of Words, I found we were slipt into that condition which Seneca *complains of in his time*; When mens minds once begin to enure themselves to dislike, whatever is usual is disdained: They affect novelty in speech, they recal ore-worn and uncouth words, they forge new phrases, and that which is newest is best liked; there is presumptuous, and far fetching of words: And some there are that think it a grace, if their speech hover, and thereby hold the hearer in suspence, *&c.*

I believ'd my self not singular in this ignorance; and that few, without the help of a Dictionary, *would be able to understand our ordinary English Books. I found nothing considerable in this kinde extant, though now many make it their study to be learned in our own Language; and I remember* Aristotles, Verba valent in usu sicut & nummi. *For these Reasons, and to indulge my own fancy, I began to compile this Work; which has taken me up the vacancy of above Twenty years.*

Besides the Words *of the nature before specified, you have here such and so many of the most useful* Law Terms *as I thought necessary for every Gentle-*

TRANSCRIPT:

Glossographia - Cooks, Vintners and Tailors
religious Orders; as **Carmelites, Carthusians, Cistursians, Theatins, Bonhomes**, &c. *So like both of antient and modern* Sects; as **Arrians, Eutychians, Jacobites**, &c. **Anabaptists, Arminians, Erastians, Thraskites, Socinians, Quakers**, &c.

In Books of Divinity, I found **Sanhedrim, Urim,** *and* **Thummim, Shibboleth, Hypostatical, Circumincession, Introversion, Extroversion**, **&c.**

In every **Mercurius, Coranto, Gazet**, or **Diurnal**, *I met with* **Camizado's, Pallizado's, Lantspezado's, Brigades, Squadrons, Curasiers, Bonmine, Halts, Jungas's, Paroles, &c.**

In the mouths of common people, I heard of **Piazza, Balcone, &c**. *in* London : *And in the country of* **Hocktide, Minnying days, Lurdanes, Quintins, &c.**

Nay, to that pass we are now arrived, that in London many of the Tradesmen have new Dialects; The Cook*asks you what Dishes you will have in your* Bill of Fare; *whether* **Olia's, Bisques, Hachies, Omelets**,**Bouillon's, Gilliades, Joncades, Fricasses;** with a **Hautgoust, Ragoust**, &c.

The Vintner will furnish you with **Montefiascone, Alicant, Vernaccia, Rivolla, Tent, &c**. *Others with* **Sherbert, Agro di Cedro, Coffa, Chocolate &c.**

The Taylor is ready to mode you into a **Rochet, Manillion, Gippon, Justacor, Capouch, Hoqueton,** *or a Cloke* of **Drap-de-Berry, &c.**

The Shoo-maker *will make you* Boots, **Whole Chase, Demi-Chase, or Bottines, &c.**

The Barber *will modifie your Beard into* **A la Manchint, a la Gasconade**, or **a la Candale.**

The Haberdasher is ready to furnish with a **Vigone, Codebec**, or **Castor, &c.** *The Semstress with a* **Crabbat, Toylet, &c.**

By this new world of Words, I found we were slipt into that condition which Seneca complains of in his time; When mens minds once begin to enure themselves to dislike, whatever is usual is disdained: They affect novelty in speech, they recal oreworn and uncouth words, they forge new phrases, and that which is newest is best liked; there is presumptuous, and far fetching of words: And some there are that think it a grace, if their speech hover, and thereby hold the hearer in suspence, &c.

I believ'd my self not singular in this ignorance; and that few, without the help of a Dictionary, *would be able to understand our ordinary English Books. I found nothing considerable in this kinde extant, though now many make it their study to be learned in our own language; and I remember* Anstotles, Verba valent in usu sicut & nummi. *For these Reasons, and to indulge my own fancy, I began to compile this Work; which has taken me up the vacancy of above Twenty years. Besides the* Words *of the nature before specified, you have here such and so many of the most useful* Law Terms *as I thought necessary for every Gentleman.*


Cockneigh) born with
in the ſound of Bow-bell
that is within the City of
London, which term came
firſt (according to Minſheu)
out of this Tale; A Citizens
Son riding with his Father
out of London into the Coun
try, and being
was reduced into one
Code, or Codice, by Juſtinian
the Emperor, it being before
in three, which is therefore
called Juſtinians Code. Min.
Codebec (Fr.) a kinde of
courſe French hat ſo called.
Codicil (codicillus) a dimi-
nutive of Code or Codex) a
little book, a Schedule

THE
Vocal Organ,

OR

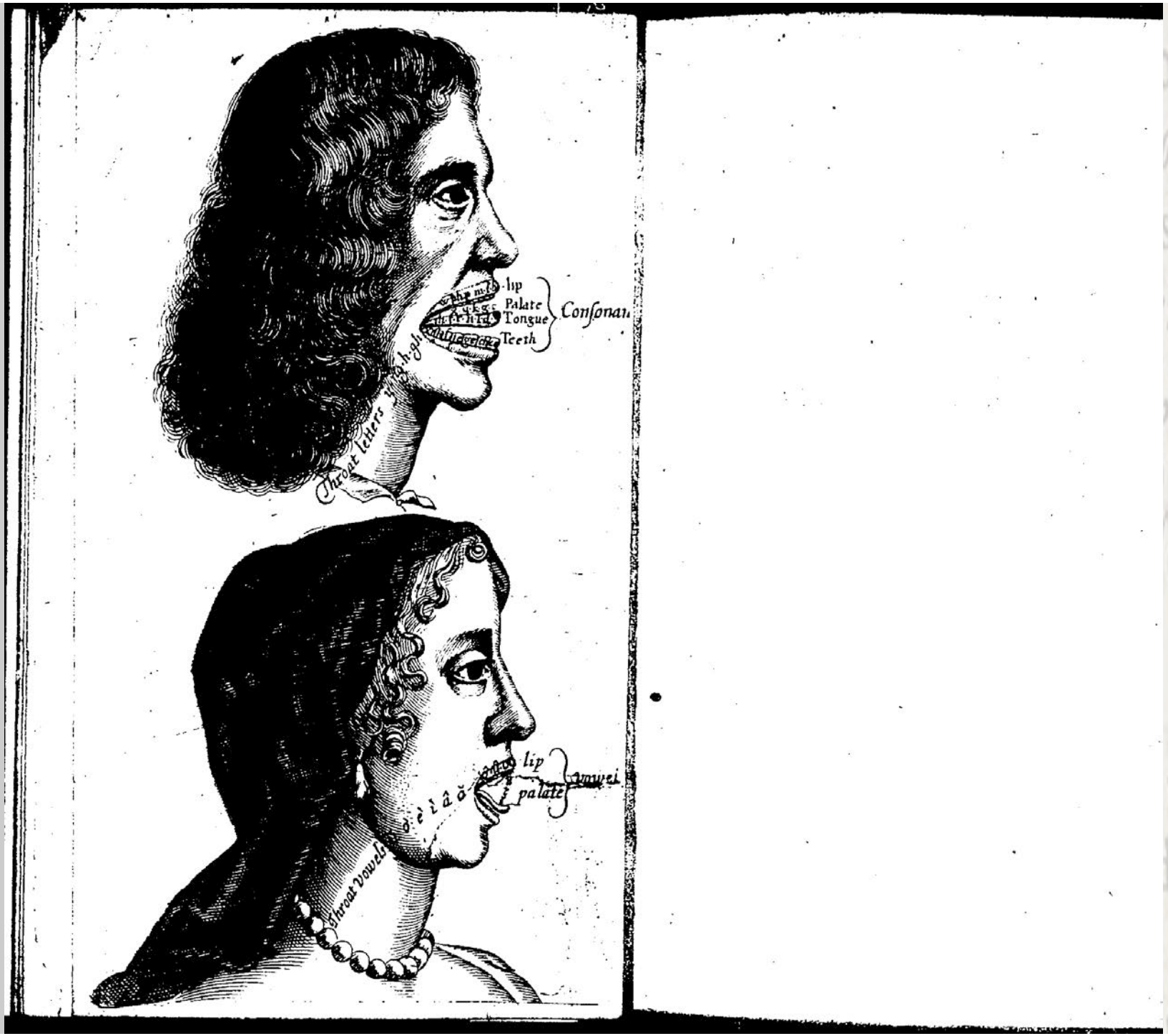
A new Art of teaching the
Engliſh Orthographie,

By obſerving the inſtruments of Pronunciation, and the difference between words of like ſound, whereby any Outlandiſh, or meer Engliſh Man, Woman, or Child, may ſpeedily attain to the exact ſpelling, reading, writing, or pronouncing of any word in the *Engliſh* tongue, without the advantage of its Fountains, the *Greek*, and *Latine*.

Compiled by O. P. Maſter of Arts, and Profeſſor of the Art of PEDAGOGIE.

Τὰ μὲν κοινὰ, καινῶς:
Τὰ δ' καινὰ, κοινῶς.

OXFORD,
Printed by *William Hall*, for
Amos Curteyne. 1665.


lip
Palate
Tongue
Teeth
Consonan
Throat letters
lip
palate
Throat vowels

English Orthographie.

OR

The Art of right ſpelling, reading, pro-nouncing, and writing all ſorts of Engliſh Words.

WHEREIN

Such, as one can poſſibly miſtake, are digeſted in an Alphabetical Order, under their ſeveral, ſhort, yet plain Rules.

ALSO

Some Rules for the points, and pronunciation, and the uſing of the great letters.

TOGETHER WITH

The difference between words of like ſound.

All which are ſo ſuited to every Capacitie, that he, who ſtudies this Art, according to the Directions in the Epiſtle, may be ſpeedily, and exactly grounded in the whole Language.

Maxima pendent a minimis.
Peccare in minimis *Sen:*
maximum eſt peccatum.

OXFORD.
Printed by HENRY HALL, for FRANCIS TITON, at the three Daggers in *Fleet ſtreet*, 1668.

pra pre pri pro pru	sky skew	ſtra ſtre ſtri ſtro ſtru
pſalm	ſla ſle ſli ſlo ſlu	ſtrew
Sca ſce ſci ſco ſcu ſcy	ſma ſme ſmi ſmo ſmu	Tha the thi thy tho
ſche ſcho ſchool	ſna ſne ſni ſno ſnu	thu
ſcra ſcri ſcro ſcru	ſphear	Wha whe whelps whi
ſha ſhe ſhi ſho ſhu	ſplay ſple ſpli	why who
ſhew	ſqua ſque ſqui	wra wre wri wry
ſhri ſhrewd	ſta ſte ſti ſto ſtu	wro wrung.

Orthographie.

If this correction of the letters will not ſink into the blockish, or ignorant Teacher's head, let him go off to ſpelling-

Q. What is Or-tho-gra-phie?

A. *Or-tho-gra-phie is an Art of right ſpel-ling, and wri-ting the let-ters*

Q. How are the let-ters di-vi-ded?

A. *The let-ters are di-vi-ded in-to vow-els, and con-ſo-nants.*

Q. What is a vow-el?

A. *A vow-el is a let-ter which ma-keth a per-fect ſound of it ſelf.*

Q. What is a dip-thong?

A. *A dip-thong is two vow-els join-ed into one ſound, as meat not me-at, meet not me-et.*

Q. What is a con-ſo-nant?

A. *A con-ſo-nant is a let-ter which ma-keth a ſound by the help of a vow-el, or a dip-thong.*

Q. How many vow-els are there?

A. *There are ſix vow-els, a, e, i, o, u, and, y af-ter a con-ſo-nant.*

Q. How many con-ſo-nants are there?

A. *There are twen-ty one con-ſo-nants.*

Q. When are the i, and u, made con-ſo-nants?

A. *When a vow-el fol-lowes the, j, and v, in the ſame ſyl-la-ble they are made con-ſo-nants, as Je-ho-vah; but when a vow-el fol-lowes them in a diſ-ferent ſyl-la-ble, they are vow-els, as in-ju-ri-ous, ver-tu-ous.*

Q. Why

Q. Why do you add the j, and v, con-ſo-nants as diſ-ſe-rent let-ters, from what we have com-mon-ly in our Pri-mars?

A. *There are three things that do make up a let-ter: 1 Forme, 2 Name, 3 Sound. 1, The, j, con-ſo-nant with its long tail, is of a diſ-ſe-rent form. 2 It is called, je. 3 It ſoundes like* gee. *So the, v, con-ſo-nant doth, 1, ſlope nar-row-er tow-ard the bot-tom. 2 It is cal-led, ve. 3 It ſoundes like ſoft, f, as ſea-ver, not ſea-ver: wives, not wines.*

Exact Scholars, and the Printers to call this, j, je: but I call it je; for if I ask one what ſpell's ma-a, he will ſay ja, or what ſpell's ja he will ſay ja: but ask him what ſpell's je-a, he will ſay ja. ſo je, jo, ju.

Q. How do you pro-nounce, c, be-fore the vow-els?

A. *Ca, ce, ci, co, cu*

Q. Do you call this, c, ſee, be-fore, a, o, u?

A. *I muſt call, c, kee, not, ſee, be-fore a, o, u: for if the Tea-cher call's it, ſee, he ſhould not beat a child for ſay-ing c-a, ſa, c-o, ſo, c-u ſu.*

Q. Why do you call, the c, *kee*, be-fore, a, o, u?

A. *To pre-vent mi-ſtakes, I call the, c, be-fore a, o, u, kee; be-cauſe we ne-ver write, k, be-fore, a, o, u, but, c. and then it ſoundes like, k.*

Q. Why do you call, c, *ſee*, be-fore, e, or, i?

A. *I call, c, be-fore, e, or, i, ſee, be-cauſe, it hath the ſound of hard, ſ, as grace, price.*

Q. How do you pronounce, g, be-fore the vow-els?

A. *ga, ge, gi, go, gu.*

Q. Do you call, g, gee, be-fore, a, o, u?

A. *Be-cauſe I pro-nounce, g, be-fore a, o, u, with my palate, I call it, ghee; leſt by the teacher's asking what ſpell's, gee-a, the child ſhould ſay, ja, gee-o, jo, gee-u, ju, for, ga, go, gu.*

Q. Why do you call, g, gee, be-fore, e, or, i?

A. *I call, g, gee, be-fore, e, or, i, be-cauſe it ſoundes tho-row the low-er * teeth, as gin-ger.*

* Except few words.

Q. Why do you call (ach) h, he?

A. *I call (ach) h, he, be-cauſe when the Teacher aſ-kes a child, what ſpell's ach) h-a, he will be rea-dy to an-ſwer, cha, whereas if he had aſ-ked him he-a, he would have ſaid, ha.*

Q. Why do you call (dou-ble u) w, we?

A. *I call (dou-ble u) w, we, be-cauſe, if the Tea-cher aſkes,*

what

A cóntract	To contráct
A cónvey	To convéy
A déſert	To deſért
Fréquent	To frequént
An íncenſe	To incénſe
An óbject	To objéct
An óverthrow	To overthrów
A prémiſs	To premíſe
A préſent	To preſént
A récord	To recórd
A réfuſe	To refúſe
A rébel	To rebél
A ſúrvey	To ſurvéy
A tórment	To torménr.

So Húmane when it comes before a ſubſtantive, as húmane learning.

But humáne after a ſubſtantive, as Chriſt had two natures, The one Divine, that other Humáne.

Of the great Letters.

Q. How do you know when to write the great letters?

A. *That muſt be a great letter, which is the firſt in*

1. *A proper name of a perſon, or place, as* Charls, England.

2 *The firſt letter in a Sentence, as the firſt letter in your writing, or the firſt after a period.*

3. *The firſt letter in a verſe.*

4. *I, by it ſelf is a great, I, as I am.*

5. *All thoſe words that imply an emphaſis, or what is remarkable, muſt be written with a great letter.*

letter. as, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Points uſed in writing, are either in { *Words, or Sentences.*

1. Above the Words.

Points uſed in words are either

1. A Poſtraphus *is a Note written juſt over the place of a Vowel that is cut off; as cloſ'd for cloſed, it's for it is.* But it is needleſs to write an *Apoſtrophus* where ,*s*, is ſet for ,*th*; as loves for he loveth: there being nothing omitted, only the ,*th*; which in ſound is but one letter, is changed into ,*s*.

2. Dieresis *is a Note of a Dipthong parted into two Syllables; as* Archelaus, Alpheus, Ceſarea.

2. In the Words.

Hyphen *is a Note of connexion thus,=, or rather thus,- when there is a compound word parted in the midſt, as ſelf-love, heart-ſearching: or when a word is parted in the end of a line, as* They are bleſ- 1. -
-ſed that fear God, and work righteouſneſs.

Eclipſis *is a piece of a line, to denote that ſome part of the verſe is left out: as,* 2. ——

—— When

London Engraved by Bromley

JOHNSON's DICTIONARY

OF THE

English Language

IN MINIATURE.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

AN ALPHABETICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

HEATHEN DEITIES;

A LIST of the CITIES, BOROUGHS, and MARKET TOWNS in ENGLAND and WALES;

A COPIOUS CHRONOLOGY;

And a concise EPITOME of the most remarkable EVENTS during the FRENCH REVOLUTION.

By the Rev. JOSEPH HAMILTON, *M. A.*
Master of the Academy at Hemel Hemsted, Herts.

FIFTH EDITION.

London:

PRINTED BY G. STAFFORD:

And sold by CHAMPANTE and WHITROW, Jewry-street, Aldgate; M. WATSON, Hermitage; and by all other Booksellers in Great Britain.

1796.

[Drawback.]

Dr Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755

Some Definitions from Johnson's Dictionary:

Cough: A convulsion of the lungs, vellicated by some sharp serosity.

Distiller: One who makes and sells pernicious and inflammatory spirits.

Dull: Not exhilaterating (sic); not delightful; as, *to make dictionaries is* dull *work*.

Excise: A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid.

Far-fetch: A deep stratagem. A ludicrous word.

Jobbernowl: Loggerhead; blockhead.

Kickshaw: A dish so changed by the cookery that it can scarcely be known.

Lexicographer: A writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the signification of words.

Johnson's focus on the need to institutionalize the lexicon of the standard language was unwavering. 'I have laboured', he says in the *Rambler*, 'to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations.' But as the task progressed, he became a realist. His Preface contains a famous statement of retraction:

> "When we see men grow old and die at a certain time one after another, from century to century, we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life to a thousand years; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided, who being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their words and phrases from mutability, shall imagine that his dictionary can embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay, that it is in his power to change sublunary nature, and clear the world at once from folly, vanity, and affectation."

By the end of the Early Modern English period there were many who felt that there had been just a little too much 'wild creative delight' in the English language, and that a road had been built which indeed was pointing firmly in the direction of chaos.

Samuel Johnson, in the *Preface* to his *Dictionary* (1755), concurred:

> When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetick without rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated; choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without any established principle of selection.

Jonathan SWIFT, "A proposal for correcting, improving and ascertaining the English tongue" (1712):

> My LORD; I do here, in the Name of all the Learned and Polite Persons of the Nation, complain to your LORDSHIP, as First Minister, that our Language is **extremely imperfect**; that its daily Improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily **Corruptions**; that the Pretenders to polish and refine it, have chiefly multiplied **Abuses and Absurdities**; and, that in many Instances, it **offends** against every Part of Grammar.

Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773).

British statesman, diplomat, and wit, chiefly remembered as the author *of Letters to His Son and Letters to His Godson* — guides to manners, the art of pleasing, and the art of worldly success.

. . . etiquette. . . 1750:

> For instance: do you use yourself to carve, eat, and drink genteelly, and with ease? Do you take care to walk, sit, stand, and present yourself gracefully? Are you sufficiently upon your guard against awkward attitudes, and illiberal, ill-bred, and disgusting habits; such as scratching yourself, putting your fingers in your mouth, nose, and ears? Tricks always acquired at schools, often too much neglected afterwards; but, however, extremely ill-bred and nauseous.

Politeness in the eighteenth century meant much more than mere etiquette, and minding your ps and qs. It was an all-embracing philosophy of life, and a model for a harmonious society. It promoted openness and accessibility in social behaviour, but at the same time set strict standards of decorum for merchants and manufacturers to live up to. Politeness demanded that people should make themselves agreeable to others, to give pleasure as well as take it. Indeed the social lubrication which politeness offered was one of its great attractions, because it offered a way for very different sorts of people to get along without violence, and helped heal the wounds of civil war. Politeness was an intellectual response to the uncompromising religious fanaticism of the civil war years, and the political hatreds which lingered afterwards.

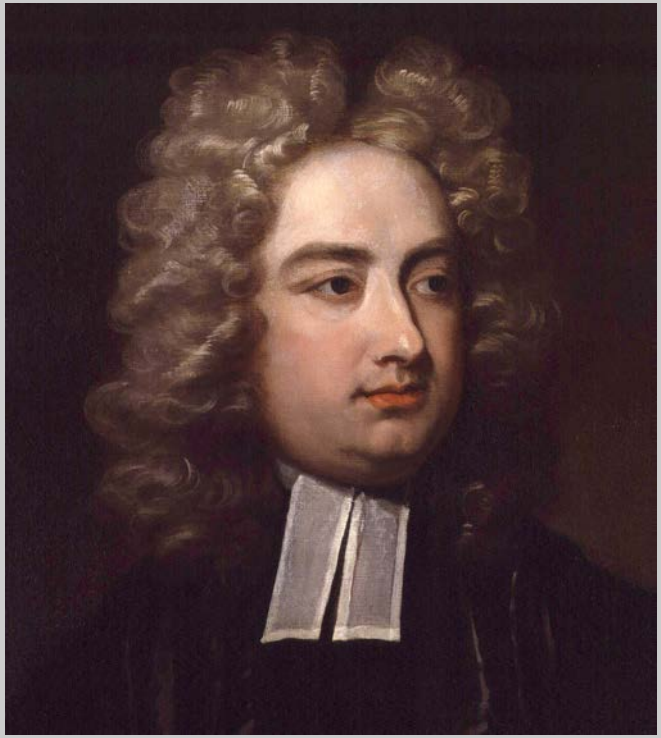
(Amanda Vickery, *In Pursuit of Pleasure*, 2001).

1. Left to themselves, polite people do not speak or write correctly.

2. Grammars, dictionaries, and other manuals are therefore needed in order to instruct polite society in the correct ways of speaking and writing.

3. No-one is exempt. Even the best authors, such as Shakespeare, break the rules from time to time.

4. And if even Shakespeare breaks the rules, this proves the need for guidance, because lesser mortals are even more likely to fall into the same trap.



Jonathan Swift, *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712)

the Plays, and other Compositions, written for Entertainment within Fifty years past; filled with a Succession of affected Phrases, and new, conceited Words.

There is another Sett of Men who have contributed very much to the spoiling of the English Tongue; I mean the Poets, from the Time of the Restoration.

a foolish Opinion, advanced of late Years, that we ought to spell exactly as we speak; which beside the obvious Inconvenience of utterly destroying our Etymology, would be a thing we should never see an End of.

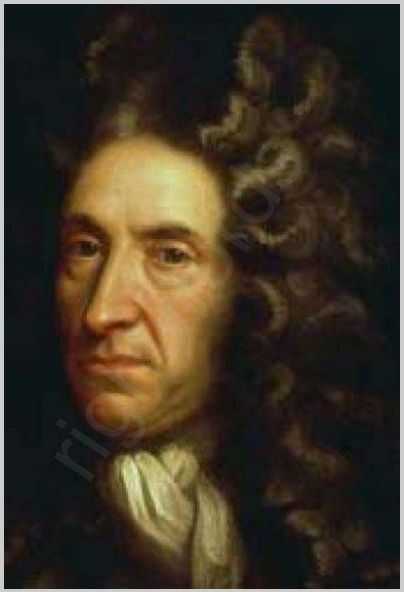
the Day approach'd when Fortune shou'd decide
Th' important Enterprize, and give the Bride.

The Waves, and Dens of beasts cou'd not receive
The bodies that those Souls were frighted from.

The Preposition in the end of the sentence; a common fault with him, and which I have but lately observ'd in my own writings.

And what correctness after this, can be expected from Shakespear or from Fletcher, who wanted that Learning and Care which Jonson had? I will therefore spare my own trouble of inquiring into their faults: who had they liv'd now, had doubtless written more correctly.

(J. Dryden, "Defence of and Epilogue, 1672)



Daniel Defoe, 'Of Academies', from *An essay upon Projects* (1697)

The Work of this Society shou'd be to encourage **Polite Learning**, to **polish and refine** the English Tongue, and advance the so much neglected Faculty of Correct Language, to establish **Purity and Propriety of Stile**, and to **purge** it from all the Irregular Additions that Ignorance and Affectation have introduc'd; and all those Innovations in Speech, if I may call them such, which some Dogmatic Writers have the Confidence to foster upon their Native Language, as if their Authority were sufficient to make their own Fancy legitimate.

Into this Society should be admitted none but Persons Eminent for Learning, and yet none, or but very few, whose Business or Trade was Learning: For I may be allow'd, I suppose, to say, We have seen many great Scholars, meer Learned Men, and Graduates in the last Degree of Study, whose English has been far from Polite, full of Stiffness and Affectation, hard Words, and long unusual Coupling of Syllables and Sentences, which sound harsh and untuneable to the Ear, and shock the Reader both in Expression and Understanding. In short, There should be room in this Society for neither Clergyman, Physician, or Lawyer…

I wou'd therefore have this Society wholly compos'd of Gentlemen; whereof Twelve to be of the Nobility, if possible, and Twelve Private Gentlemen, and a Class of Twelve to be left open for meer merit.

though I would by no means give Ladies the Trouble of advising us in the Reformation of our Language; yet I cannot help thinking, that since they have been left out of all Meetings, except Parties at Play, or where worse Designs are carried on, our Conversation hath very much degenerated.

The Reputation of this Society wou'd be enough to make them the allow'd Judges of Stile and Language; **and no Author wou'd have the Impudence to Coin without their Authority** ... There shou'd be no more occasion to search for Derivations and Constructions, and 'twou'd be as **Criminal** then to Coin Words, as Money.

In this country an academy could be expected to do but little. If an academician's place were profitable it would be given by interest; if attendance were gratuitous it would be rarely paid, and no man would endure the least disgust. Unanimity is impossible, and debate would separate the assembly. But suppose the philological decree made and promulgated, what would be its authority? In absolute governments there is sometimes a general reverence paid to all that has the sanction of power and the countenance of greatness. How little this is the state of our country needs not to be told. We live in an age in which it is a kind of publick sport to refuse all respect that cannot be enforced. The edicts of an English academy would probably be read by many, only that they might be sure to disobey them. That our language is in perpetual danger of corruption cannot be denied; but what prevention can be found? The present manners of the nation would deride authority, and therefore nothing is left but that every writer should criticise himself.

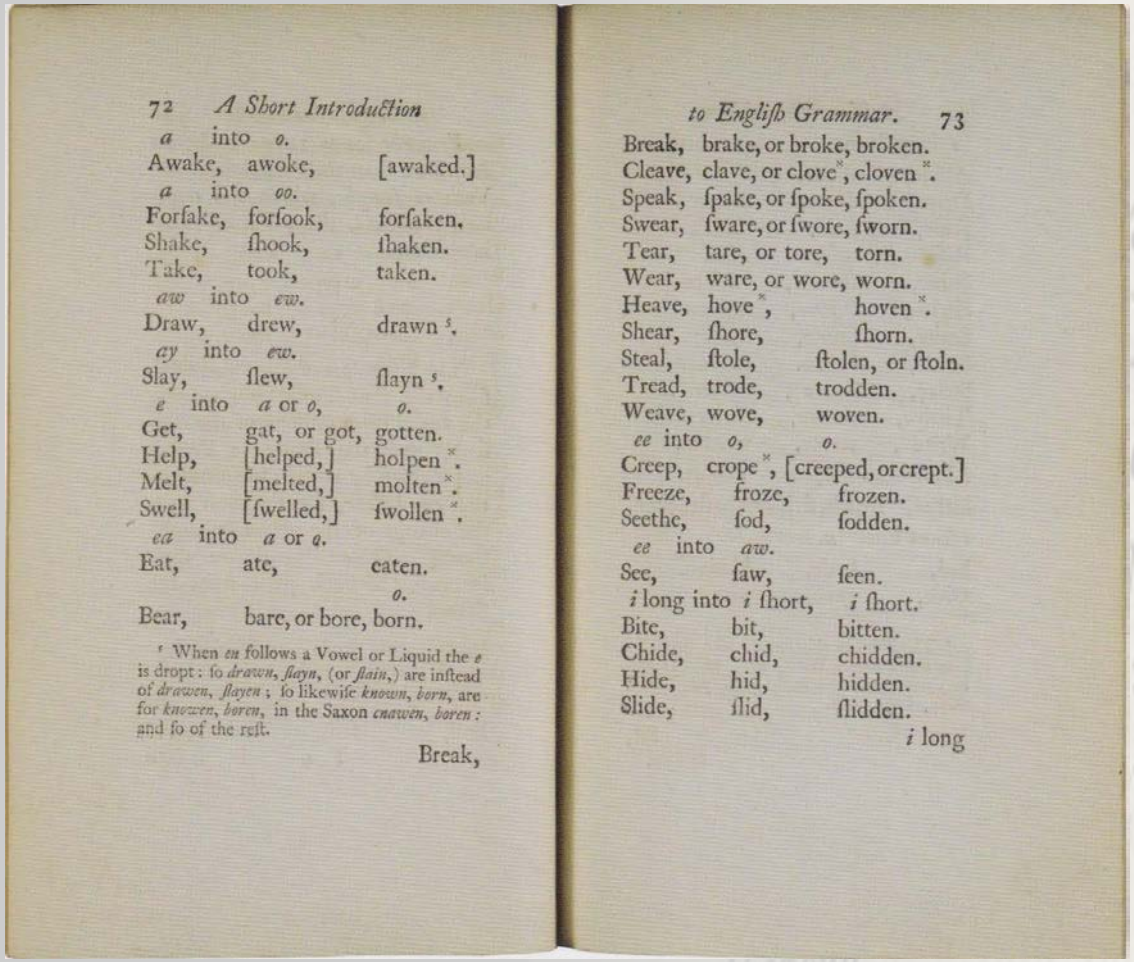
From "Roscommon", in Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* series, published in 3 volumes between 1779 and 1781.

In literate nations, though the pronunciation, and sometimes the words of common speech may differ, as now in England, compared with the south of Scotland, yet there is a written diction, which pervades all dialects, and is understood in every province. But where the whole language is colloquial, he that has only one part, never gets the rest, as he cannot get it but by change of residence.

(Samuel Johson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 1773)

The most important of the early prescriptive grammarians was the clergyman **Robert Lowth** (1710–87).

He was professor of poetry at Oxford, and bishop of London at the height of his career. His anonymously published *Short Introduction to English Grammar: with Critical Notes* appeared in 1762.
the prescriptive tone of Lowth's book can be judged from his Preface, in which he affirms Jonathan Swift's view that "the English language, as it is spoken by the politest part of the nation, and as it stands in the writings of our most approved authors, often offends against every part of grammar".



72 *A Short Introduction*

a into *o*.

Awake, awoke, [awaked.]

a into *oo*.

Forſake, forſook, forſaken.
Shake, ſhook, ſhaken.
Take, took, taken.

aw into *ew*.

Draw, drew, drawn [s].

ay into *ew*.

Slay, ſlew, ſlayn [s].

e into *a* or *o*, *o*.

Get, gat, or got, gotten.
Help, [helped,] holpen [x].
Melt, [melted,] molten [x].
Swell, [ſwelled,] ſwollen [x].

ea into *a* or *o*.

Eat, ate, eaten.
o.
Bear, bare, or bore, born.

[s] When *en* follows a Vowel or Liquid the *e* is dropt: ſo *drawn*, *ſlayn*, (or *ſlain*,) are inſtead of *drawen*, *ſlayen*; ſo likewiſe *known*, *born*, are for *knowen*, *boren*, in the Saxon *cnawen*, *boren*: and ſo of the reſt.

Break,

to Engliſh Grammar. 73

Break, brake, or broke, broken.
Cleave, clave, or clove [x], cloven [x].
Speak, ſpake, or ſpoke, ſpoken.
Swear, ſware, or ſwore, ſworn.
Tear, tare, or tore, torn.
Wear, ware, or wore, worn.
Heave, hove [x], hoven [x].
Shear, ſhore, ſhorn.
Steal, ſtole, ſtolen, or ſtoln.
Tread, trode, trodden.
Weave, wove, woven.

ee into *o*, *o*.

Creep, crope [x], [creeped, or crept.]
Freeze, froze, frozen.
Seethe, ſod, ſodden.

ee into *aw*.

See, ſaw, ſeen.

i long into *i* ſhort, *i* ſhort.

Bite, bit, bitten.
Chide, chid, chidden.
Hide, hid, hidden.
Slide, ſlid, ſlidden.

i long

The illustration shows pages from Lowth's section on Irregular verbs. It is difficult to be sure how many of these forms were actually still in common use in the 1760s, but they show several interesting differences compared with the present day, such as *holpen, hoven* and *sware* (alongside *swore*). *Gotten,* according to Lowth was apparently still the approved form for the past of of 'to get' in British English of the time. Although now associated chiefly with American English, it can still be heard in several British regional dialects.

Lindley Murray (1745-1826) was a New York lawyer and businessman who in c. 1784 retired to Holgate, near York, England, because of ill-health.

There, as a result of a request to provide material for use at a local girls' school, he wrote his *English Grammar, adapted to the different classes of learners; With an Appendix, containing Rules and Observations for Promoting Perspicuity in Speaking and Writing*. Both Lowth's and Murray's works went into many editions. Lowth had forty-five by 1800. But it was Murray's *Grammar* which had the greater influence. It became the second bestselling work (after Noah Webster's spelling-book) in the English-speaking world, with 200 editions by 1850, selling over 20 million copies, even more popular in the United States than in Britain, and translated into many languages. Twentieth-century school grammars – at least, until the 1960s – would all trace their ancestry back to Murray. Murray's dependence on Lowth's *Grammar* is obvious throughout, to the point of plagiarism. Ethical issues aside, both grammars illustrate the way in which a prescriptive orthodoxy was taking hold in schools on both sides of the Atlantic.

Lowth amplified Dryden's anxiety over placing a preposition at the end of a sentence:

> The preposition is often separated from the relative which it governs, and joined to the Verb at the end of the Sentence, or of some member of it: as, 'Horace is an author, whom I am much delighted with'.

He is well aware that this is a normal English-speaking practice in informal usage.

> This is an idiom, which our language is strongly inclined to: it prevails in common conversation, and suits very well the familiar style in writing:

The 'strong inclination' can in fact be traced back to early Middle English. But doubtless the etymology of the word weighed heavily with him: if it is a preposition it must go before, not after; and he concludes:

> but the placing of the preposition before the Relative is more graceful, as well as more perspicuous; and agrees much better with the solemn and elevated style.

In the above prescription, Lowth actually ends one of his sentences with a preposition: …*which our language is strongly inclined to*. Murray, taking over the point wholesale, must have noticed, for in his grammar he corrects it: *This is an idiom to which our language is strongly inclined*. But even Murray lets his guard down from time to time: on p. 40 of his book we read *so convenient is it to have one acknowledged standard to recur to*.

Good practice could be achieved only by practice which was duly prescribed in Lindley Murray's follow-up book: *English Exercises, Adapted to the Grammar Lately Published*, which appeared in 1797.

Section 5 adumbrated: 'A fifth rule for the strength of sentences, is, to avoid concluding them with an adverb, a preposition, or an inconsiderable word.'

> By what I have already expressed, the reader will perceive the business which I am to proceed upon.
> Generosity is a showy virtue, which many persons are very fond of.

The Key at the back of the book tells us that the correct versions are:

> *upon which I am to proceed*
>
> *of which many persons are very fond*

Schoolchildren learned a black-and-white rule: **one should never end a sentence with a preposition.**

This allegedly led to Winston Churchill's witty remark that…